
Regional Council Activity Report

October 10, 2000

Briefing to Member Agencies from Executive Director James M. Bourey



Executive Director's Report

It's difficult to believe that the Year 2000 is three-quarters complete! It seems like just yesterday we were preparing for potential Y2K difficulties, and here we are with less than three months to go before the calendar turns over again.

It is gratifying to know, however, that the Maricopa Association of Governments has leapt into the millennium in so many exciting ways. We are on the verge of launching the Valley's Regional Videoconferencing System. The implementation of the system is the culmination of two years of planning and preparation by MAG and its member agencies. The system will enable all MAG members to use videoconferencing to attend certain MAG meetings as well as for member agency business ranging from job interviews to training. The MAG videoconferencing system connects up to 27 sites for a videoconference, and up to 48 sites for an audioconference. The MAG Regional Council believes videoconferencing will save time, reduce travel, improve participation in meetings, and extend outreach to citizens.

MAG is also embarking on a new Regional Transportation Plan that will establish a transportation blueprint for decades to come. As addressed in July's Regional Council Activity Report, the new Regional Transportation Plan will contain regional goals and objectives as well as performance measures that will provide an ongoing evaluation of how well the plan is meeting objectives. MAG members and staff recently conducted interviews for consultant services to support the development of the plan, and will have a recommendation by the next Regional Council meeting.

MAG has also begun efforts to improve outreach to minority, disabled, and low income populations. We will be utilizing four associates to serve as liaisons and advocates to the Hispanic, African American, Native American, and disabled communities. The advocates will develop methods to engage the target community in the transportation decision-making process, and help MAG establish solid links to communities that are too often under-represented when it comes to input into the MAG process.

MAG also continues work on its Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) program. Within the next few months, Valley residents will begin seeing Freeway Service Patrols consisting of roving road repair service vehicles which can provide on-the-spot assistance to stranded motorists. The service will be manned by Roadside Motorist Assistants, who will patrol the Valley freeway network looking for disabled vehicles. MAG will provide the \$750,000 in funding necessary to help launch and operate the Freeway Service Patrol program, while the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has committed to an additional \$750,000 to continue the program beyond the first two years.

These are just some of the exciting impacts MAG is already having in the new millennium. Our goal continues to be to provide highly relevant, value-added services and support for our member agencies that enable the provision of excellent local government services to the citizens of our region.



Regional Council Meeting Report for October 4, 2000

Study Session Provides Information on MAG Programs

The MAG Regional Council focused on the MAG Regional Videoconferencing System, new Regional Transportation Plan, and proposed initiatives for the MAG Domestic Violence Council during its study session October 4th. The Regional Videoconferencing System and Regional Transportation Plan are described in the Executive Director's Report above. The implementation of three key initiatives to combat domestic violence was also discussed, and is described below.

The proposed domestic violence initiatives are three of 41 recommendations contained in the MAG Regional Plan on Domestic Violence approved by the MAG Regional Council last year. The MAG Domestic Violence Council sees these three initiatives as top priorities for dealing with domestic violence at the community level.

The initiatives include:

- **Workplace Policies and Practices to Address Domestic Violence** - It is estimated that domestic violence costs employers \$3-5 billion each year in lost productivity, absenteeism, employee turnover, and health care costs. The MAG Domestic Violence Council believes there is a need for policies and practices in personnel regulations and grievance procedures, to ensure that victims are protected and that the local government is not

liable if injuries do occur or if termination of a batterer is needed. The Council will focus efforts on local governments over the next year and it recommends that they develop a workplace policy and provide training to employees to recognize the signs of domestic violence.

- **Local Coordinating Councils** - Local governments dedicate significant resources of police, fire, prosecutors, social services and courts to domestic violence. The Council believes that strengthening the links between these departments will enhance knowledge about abusers and lead to more appropriate sentencing. Local coordinating councils can provide a means for departments to coordinate their efforts to the maximum benefit of victims and lead to effective consequences for perpetrators. The Council has created a training guide and will sponsor a two-day training workshop to help local jurisdictions learn how to develop their own coordinating councils.
- **Crisis Response Teams** - Research has shown that having an advocate respond to the domestic violence scene along with law enforcement has proven effective in helping victims obtain social services during a critical period when the victim is most likely to leave a violent relationship. The Council believes this team approach allows officers to attend to the criminal justice aspects of the case, while the advocate deals directly with the medical and social service needs of the victim and her children. The Council hopes to coordinate efforts among already existing crisis response teams, and to assist cities with development of a crisis response team in their communities.

Domestic Violence Council Chair Peggy Bilsten, a Phoenix councilmember, told Regional Council members that the initiatives represent a clear strategy for cities to reverse the impact of domestic violence on communities, and urged members to implement the initiatives within their cities.

For more information contact Mary Thomson, MAG Domestic Violence Specialist, (602) 254-6300.

Council Approves Enhancement Fund Rankings

The MAG Regional Council approved a recommendation by the Enhancement Funds Working Group, which reviewed and ranked a list of enhancement fund applications for the region. Twenty-seven enhancement fund applications totaling \$10.2 million were received, with only about \$7.5 million available statewide. The Enhancement Funds Working Group recommended

for review 21 of the applications, including three state projects and 18 local projects. The applications will now be forwarded to the Arizona Department of Transportation. They will be reviewed by the State Transportation Enhancement Review Committee November 13-15, 2000.

For more information contact Dawn Coomer, MAG Planner, at (602) 254-6300.

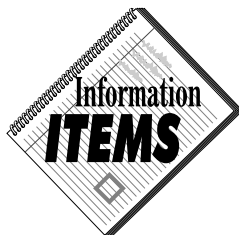


Upcoming Issues

Joint Meeting to Look at Funding Issues

Members of the Maricopa Association of Governments and Pima Association of Governments will once again meet in the city of Casa Grande to discuss issues affecting regional issues. Among the topics discussed will be transportation funding allocations, funding needs, strategies for seeking additional revenue sources, and a review of the activities of the Governor's Transportation Vision 21 Task Force.

For more information contact James M. Bourey, MAG Executive Director, or Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, at (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

MAG, ADOT Boards Consider Funding Needs

The new MAG Regional Transportation Plan – and how to pay for it – were the focus of discussion during a joint meeting between members of the MAG Regional Council Executive Committee and the State Transportation Board October 5th. With both ADOT and MAG developing new long range transportation plans, the two agencies sought to identify transportation needs and revenue shortfalls.

Funding projections for the existing long range Plan have assumed an extension of the half-cent sales tax, due to expire in 2005. Funding shortfalls are projected at \$9.4 billion in the next 20 years. Replacement options for the sales tax include a new sales tax, increasing the gas tax or a combination of these sources. Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza suggested that any proposed increase in the sales tax be earmarked for specific projects, with half of the funding going to roadways and half toward transit.

For more information contact James M. Bourey, MAG Executive Director, or Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, at (602) 254-6300.

West Valley Residents Help Plan Trails

Dozens of West Valley residents interested in helping to create a 42-mile system of paths stretching from New River to Avondale turned out for a Trail Design Workshop October 6th and 7th. During the one-and-a-half day workshop, participants worked with project team members to help shape and create the best design for the non-motorized system of paths along the New River and Lower Agua Fria River. Participants identified specific trail alignments, linkages and amenities and discussed solutions to project issues such as neighborhood access.

The New River and Lower Agua Fria Multi-Modal Corridor Study is a planned 42-mile system of urban and rural trails. The trails are being designed with pedestrians, hikers, bicyclists and equestrians in mind, and the pathways will link homes, businesses, schools and recreation destinations. The trail study corridor stretches southwest from the community of New River to the convergence of the Lower Agua Fria with the Gila River. The study is sponsored by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) with funding through the Arizona Department of Transportation, and with support from the Flood Control District of Maricopa County.



Upcoming Events

MAG, ADOT Staffs to Participate in Partnering Session

To further expand the principles of the Casa Grande Resolves – which unify the transportation decision-making process into one seamless, multi-modal process – MAG and ADOT staffs will meet in a partnering session October 27th. Discussions will center on improving working relationships between the agencies to create early and continuous interaction throughout the planning process.

For more information contact James M. Bourey, Executive Director, or Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, at (602) 254-6300.

Agua Fria Freeway Opens Two Years Ahead of Schedule

On Saturday, October 14, 2000, Valley residents will bike, stroll, jog, and rollerblade on the soon-to-be-open Agua Fria Freeway. The grand opening celebrates the last stretch of freeway to be opened that will complete Loop 101 between I-10 and I-17. The section between Interstate 10 and Northern

Avenue marks a six-mile, \$88.5 million extension and includes a \$32.7 million three-tiered interchange.

The acceleration was made possible, in part, through a MAG analysis that helped locate the dollars needed for the project. MAG will have a booth at the Agua Fria grand opening to distribute information about MAG and its regional programs, including maps outlining an accelerated construction schedule that will see the completion of the Regional Freeway System by 2007.

For more information contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 1, 2000 at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Ave., Suite 200. Agenda items are expected to include a recommendation for approval of a resolution for the future designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the MAG region, a recommendation for a consultant to develop Phase One of the MAG Regional Transportation Plan, and a review of the Early Phase Input Opportunity Report.

For more information contact Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, (602) 254-6300.